

DD/A Registry
77-5921

Executive Registry
77-9585A

14 NOV 1977

Dr. James B. Rhoads
Acting Chairman
Interagency Classification Review Committee
Washington, DC 20408

Dear Dr. Rhoads:

This is in reply to your letter of 26 October 1977, wherein you called to my attention the fact that the Central Intelligence Agency had, in numerous instances, failed to process mandatory classification review requests within the time limits established by Executive Order 11652.

Be assured that I share your concern. There have been extenuating circumstances, however, of which you may not be fully aware. The task of processing mandatory classification review requests falls upon the same personnel responsible for the handling of Freedom of Information and Privacy Act requests. These requests have been received in such volume that it has been impossible to fulfill them as promptly as we would like, and a sizable backlog has developed. In an effort to comply fully with both the letter and spirit of the law, the Agency has been devoting the equivalent of 100 man-years per year to processing requests, appeals, and litigation arising from requests from members of the public. Despite this, our backlog of unanswered requests not only persists but, in recent months, has grown. We, as an Agency, cannot divert additional manpower to this effort without seriously impairing our ability to perform our basic mission. It is our hope that in due course public interest in past CIA activities, which was stimulated by recent disclosures, will subside and the request level will fall to the point where our responses to requests will be as timely as we would desire.

On a more positive note, I am pleased to inform you that the Agency has closed out 452 mandatory classification review requests thus far in 1977, 108 more than were completed during all of 1976. Despite a significant increase in the

number of requests received, the unprocessed backlog has grown by only 20 cases and now stands at 108 cases. While this may seem large, it seems almost insignificant when compared to our unprocessed backlog of 869 Freedom of Information requests and 1,150 Privacy requests.

I can assure you that we will continue to make every effort to comply with the mandatory classification requirements.

Sincerely,

/s/John F. Blake

John F. Blake
Acting Deputy Director

IPS/CES/cb/7 Nov 77

Orig. - Adse.

- 1 - IPS Chrono w/copy basic
- 1 - DDA Subject w/basic
- 1 - A/DDCI
- ① - ER
- 1 - DDA Chrono
- 1 - RAB/ISAS w/copy basic